United Nations A/54/163

General Assembly

Distr.: General
7 July 1999
English
Original: Arabic/English/Spanish

Fifty-fourth session
Item 76 (h) of the preliminary list*

General and complete disarmament: observance of environmental norms in the drafting and implementation of agreements on disarmament and arms control

Report of the Secretary-General

Contents

		Page
I.	Introduction	2
II.	Replies received from Governments	2
	Cuba	2
	Saudi Arabia	3

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I. Introduction

On 4 December 1998, the General Assembly adopted resolution 53/77 J, entitled "Observance of environmental norms in the drafting and implementation of agreements on disarmament and arms control", paragraph 5 of which reads as follows:

> "*Invites* all Member States to communicate to the Secretary-General information on the measures they have adopted to promote the objectives envisaged in the present resolution, and requests the Secretary-General to submit a report containing this information to the General Assembly at its fifty-fourth session".

II. Replies received from Governments

Cuba

[Original: Spanish]
[27 May 1999]

The international community has become increasingly cognizant of the imperative need to take steps to protect the environment. In Cuba's view, it is important, in adopting measures of this type, also to draft and implement agreements on disarmament and arms control.

It is essential to underscore the need to observe environmental norms in the preparation and implementation of disarmament and arms limitation agreements, and to recognize that in so doing due account must be taken of the agreements adopted at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, held in Rio de Janeiro from 3 to 14 June 1992, as well as of prior relevant agreements.

It has been a great satisfaction to see how the people of the world have achieved admirable results in disarmament and arms control in their determination not to allow the use of weapons of mass destruction to threaten the protection of the environment.

Nevertheless, despite the advances made in the prohibition of two categories of weapons of mass destruction, nuclear weapons still remain a threat to the very existence of the human species and the protection and preservation of the environment.

This has been another of the reasons impelling Cuba to join with other States in proposing that the Conference on Disarmament should give priority to establishing a special committee on nuclear disarmament that would start negotiations on a phased programme of nuclear disarmament aimed at the final elimination of nuclear weapons by a specific date, through the adoption of a nuclear weapons convention.

Cuba also recognizes that the prevention of a nuclear arms race on the seabed and the ocean floor and their subsoil is a factor in maintaining peace and protecting the environment. A clear indication of this is the fact that Cuba is a party to the Treaty on the Prohibition of the Emplacement of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction on the Seabed and the Ocean Floor and in the Subsoil Thereof.

Cuba is aware of the possible dangers attendant upon any use of radioactive waste, which would be tantamount to radiological war, and of the effects of such use on national, regional and international security, and especially the security of the developing countries; and also of the inherent threat to the preservation of the environment.

Cuba considers that any environmental protection measures adopted at the time of the preparation and implementation of disarmament and arms control agreements must involve unilateral, bilateral, regional and multilateral approaches.

Accordingly, in connection with one instance of multilateral action, it is important to emphasize that environmental protection requirements must be borne in mind during the negotiations being conducted by an Ad Hoc Group of Governmental Experts in Geneva to strengthen the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction by adopting appropriate measures, including possible verification measures.

Cuba is proud to be a party to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction, which contains, *inter alia*, provisions on the security of persons and the protection of the environment.

The strengthening of scientific and technological cooperation among States is also basic to the effort to achieve the objectives of General Assembly resolution 53/77 J.

In Cuba's view, the international transfer of the relevant technology, services and practical know-how for peaceful purposes can foster the observance of the environmental norms included in disarmament and arms control agreements.

Lastly, as an example of the domestic action being taken by the Republic of Cuba to promote the objectives of General Assembly resolution 53/77 J, at the present time there is a broad spectrum of Cuban institutions dealing directly with the subjects of bacteriological and toxin weapons and chemical weapons and systematically analysing the reports emerging from the negotiations on those issues taking place in Geneva and The Hague, respectively.

Saudi Arabia

[Original: Arabic]
[28 April 1999]

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia asserts that it possesses no weapons of mass destruction, in general, and, in particular, no nuclear weapons. It further asserts that it is mindful of the harmful environmental impact of weapons of mass destruction and that it has constantly urged that the environment should be protected, that it should not be damaged and that its effective contribution to the achievement of sustainable development should not be impaired.